



Life Course

Childhood Risk Factor

Brief Name

ACE: Parent or Relative with
Mental Illness

Indicator

Percent of children who lived with anyone with mental illness.

Description

This is a proxy measure for toxic stress and is included as an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE). This question asks parents, *"Did [child's name] ever live with anyone who was mentally ill or suicidal, or severely depressed for more than a couple of weeks?"*

WI

US

Best

Worst

9.7%

8.6%

5.4%

14.1%

Year

CA

MT

2011/2012

Numerator

Number of children who experienced the ACE

Denominator

Children aged 0-17

Importance

Living with someone with a mental illness is a measure of potential household dysfunction, as mental illness may preclude a parent from fully engaging with his or her children, in addition to potentially exposing a child to additional stressors due to direct (e.g. abuse) and indirect (e.g. poverty) causes (Petterson, 2001). Parental mental illness is correlated to children's negative behavior and general poor mental health (Goodman, 2011).

Limitations

The National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) does not distinguish between treated or untreated mental illness in this question.

Source

NSCH 2011/12. Data query from the Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative, Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health website. Retrieved from www.childhealthdata.org. Petterson, Stephen M., and Alison Burke Albers. "Effects of poverty and maternal depression on early child development." *Child Development*, 72.6 (2001): 1794-1813. Goodman, Sherryl H., et al. "Maternal Depression and Child Psychopathology: A Meta-Analytic Review." *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, 14.1 (2011):1-27.